

KEY INFORMATION

Materials for New Countries

2018

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1. Introduction

Home-Start is an established family support service which is active throughout the world. Membership is open to all who subscribe to the Home-Start values and practice requirements. In structure, Home-Start is led by Home-Start Worldwide, which ensures that all Home-Start standards are respected, and also helps new countries launch Home-Start. But Home-Start is essentially a decentralized, community-based organization, meaning that all national associations, and even most local schemes, are independently registered and operated, once they are approved to set up and to use the Home-Start name. If there is already a Home-Start office in your country, they will help you set up. If you are the first to launch Home-Start in your country, then Home-Start Worldwide will play this role. There are several guidance booklets to help you, and these are listed below. This first booklet lists the standards which we will expect you to meet in all aspects of your Home-Start work. These standards are also set down in the Home-Start Members' Charter and in the Home-Start Quality Assurance standards.

2. Key values

All Home-Start operations subscribe to the following basic values:

- We respect the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child.
- We are flexible and responsive to family needs and we value the importance of supporting families through friendship.
- We show understanding and sympathy in our approach to families and we are non-judgemental at all times. We believe that each person and each family has strengths which should be highlighted and developed, and we value cultural differences.
- We respect the identity and rights of each person and family we serve, and oppose any discrimination based on ethnic origin, religion, culture, physical condition, gender identity, sexual orientation, family circumstances or any other factor.
- We respect the principle of confidentiality, acknowledging that information on each family is confidential and should be kept only within Home-Start or the organisation hosting Home-Start. Information will only be disclosed with the consent of the parents, unless a child's safety is thought to be at risk.
- We adhere to the principles of equality of opportunity, fairness and diversity and gender equality in all our activity involving our staff and volunteers and the families whom we serve.

3. Practice requirements

All organizations offering the Home-Start service are expected to adhere to the following minimum requirements:

- The service is based on volunteers, usually parents themselves, who visit families, usually in their homes, on a regular basis for as long as the family needs them, sharing their own parental experience and offering informal and friendly support to both the parents and their children.



- The volunteers usually visit the families once a week for 2-3 hours, sometimes for as long as a year and most should be parents themselves.
- The families visited have at least one pre-school child, or a child aged six and under.
- The Home-Start service is always free of charge to families and families must voluntarily consent to engage in the Home-Start service.
- Home-Start should keep close links with other community services and volunteer organizations which can potentially provide additional support for parents.
- The Home-Start service must be professionally led, meaning that each Home-Start scheme must have at least one director or coordinator who is paid for his/her work for Home-Start. This person will often have a background in the social services but must also have been fully trained by Home-Start.
- Volunteers are trained by the Home-Start coordinator for at least 20 hours before starting the family visits, and must be regularly monitored in their work with families by their Home-Start supervisor.
- The service uses the name Home-Start and /or the phrase “part of the Home-Start Worldwide Network” or equivalent and the Home-Start friendship logo in its promotional literature, annual report and website.
- Safeguarding procedures are in place (police checks or equivalent, trustworthy references, interviews etc) to ensure that:
 - Volunteers and professionals who come into contact with families (children and parents) through the Home-Start service are suitable and that
 - They themselves are protected from possible risks.
- The organization running the Home-Start service must be a non-profit organization, registered according to the national law and led by an appropriate Board or Management Committee, all of whom will be volunteers. If the organization is an umbrella organization it is recommended that they have an advisory committee specifically for Home-Start.
- The organization fulfills its legal requirements according to national law.
- The organization must operate with transparency. A website or web-page for the Home-Start service is required, at minimum, national level, and ideally for each scheme as well.

The organization acting as the national reference point, i.e. the National Office or the scheme designated to act as such, will become a member of Home-Start Worldwide. Here the organization must:

- Accept to become a member of a UK company limited by guarantee.
- Accept the terms of the Home-Start Member’s Charter.
- Accept to supervise all Home-Start activity in the country, including licensing new schemes and ensuring that quality standards are maintained.
- Sign the Home-Start Worldwide Child Protection Policy and ensure that it is fully applied.
- Develop written policies on Equal Opportunities, Non-discrimination and Confidentiality, or demonstrate that national law adequately covers these issues.
- Publish Annual Reports on their activity and make them available for public viewing.



- Ensure that the Annual Financial Statements are independently audited, published and available for public viewing or made available to Home-Start Worldwide on request.
- Ideally, publish the terms of their constitutive document and the names and bio-data of their Board members and the professional staff in the office.

The National Office can also “franchise” the Home-Start service to other organizations. In such cases written agreements must be in place between the national organization and the organization that runs the Home-Start service.

The National Office must ensure that it fulfills all the above standards and provides evidence to Home-Start Worldwide. New organizations are given three years to fully comply with the above requirements. Home-Start Worldwide will support them in reaching this goal.

4. Key elements of membership policy

Membership is open to all organizations which share the values of the Home-Start network and fulfill our practice requirements. Membership has benefits and rights but also obligations.

I. Benefits

Members benefit from their participation in the Home-Start Worldwide network in several significant ways, not least through membership of a well-respected international network, with a strong sense of solidarity and family ‘spirit’, and their ability to use the Home-Start name and logo to raise their profile. Members benefit from training, information and advice, including access to the HSW documentation storage, and the HSW policy committee if they have questions about basic policy issues. They can exchange experience, make visits or develop projects with other Home-Start members. They can receive information on developments in family research, family policy etc. They attend the Members’ General Meeting where important issues relating to Home-Start strategy, policies and practice are discussed. They also attend the HSW Triennial Training Conference which provides a formal exchange of best practice and updates on new developments for all senior managers.

II. Obligations

We expect our Members to adhere to our shared values and comply with our practice requirements, support the Home-Start Worldwide activities, learning and development opportunities and exchange programmes and participate in the General Meetings of Members. Members should also be willing to contribute to the development of Home-Start policy and practice, send the required annual statistics to Home-Start Worldwide and update the information on their country’s profile for the Home-Start Worldwide website. They must also safeguard the reputation of Home-Start and act in a manner which will not bring Home-Start into disrepute and pay the annual subscription fee to Home-Start Worldwide as specified each year by the adopted system of assessment.



5. Role of Home-Start Worldwide in supporting new countries

Prospective new Members can expect to receive significant support including:

- Step-by-step guidance on how to set up their Home-Start structures and services
- Access to HSW guides for identifying needs and developing a business plan.
- Home-Start training materials and guides to policy and practice
- Initial induction for key board and office staff
- Initial training for the professional staff who will coordinate and train the volunteers and run the first Home-Start schemes.
- Arranging possible links with neighbouring or more experienced countries for specific advice or training.

Useful Guidance is available from the following sources:

- *HSW Brochure* – download from HSW website
- *Guide New Countries* – available from HSW on request
- *Business Plan* – available from HSW on request
- *Needs Assessment* –available from HSW on request
- *Members' Charter*
- The current *HSW Quality Assurance Standards* – available from HSW

